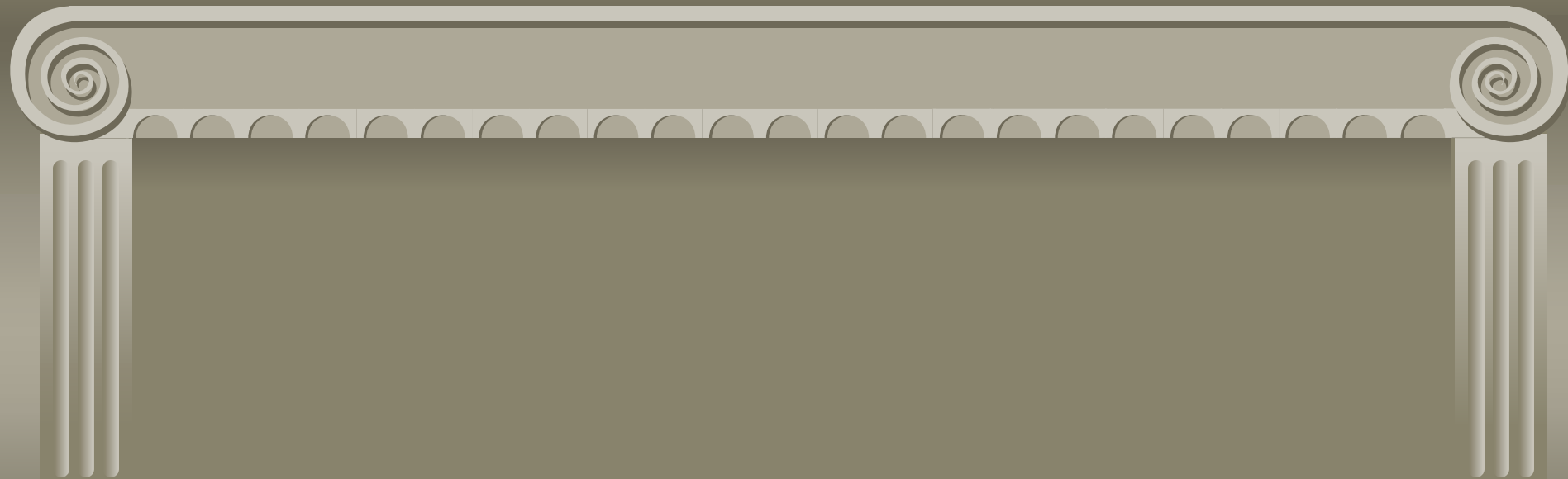


Youth Courts

Youth Delivering Justice



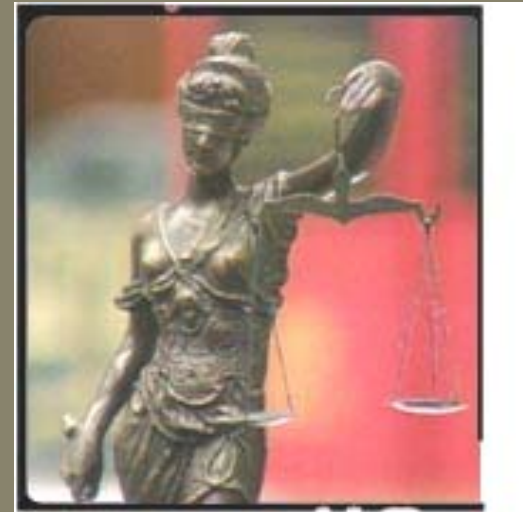
What is Youth Court?

Youth administer justice to their peers who have committed a crime or act of misconduct.



4 Youth Court Models

- ◆ Peer Jury
- ◆ Youth Judge
- ◆ Adult Judge
- ◆ Youth Tribunal



Common Elements

- ◆ Voluntary participation
- ◆ Admit guilt
- ◆ Non-serious offenses
- ◆ Youth lead
- ◆ Adult moderator
- ◆ Oath of confidentiality
- ◆ Also called peer jury, teen court, peer court

Common Elements of Youth Courts

Diversion	From juvenile court
Operating Agency	Police, prosecutor's office, probation, social service agency, or as it's own non-profit
Offenses	(usually first-time, misdemeanors) Theft, vandalism, disorderly conduct, alcohol/drug, assault, truancy, smoking, curfew
Sentences	Community service, apology letters, restitution, counseling, mentoring, tutoring, drug/ alcohol assessment, essays, anger management class

Hearing Process

- ◆ Introductions
- ◆ Opening statement
- ◆ Questioning
- ◆ Deliberation
- ◆ Presenting sentence
- ◆ Follow up



Can Incorporate Restorative Justice

- ◆ RJ is the purpose and policy statement of Illinois Juvenile Court Act
- ◆ “Victims needs *should* be addressed, offenders *should* be encouraged to take responsibility, and those affected by an offense *should* be involved in the process, regardless of whether offenders catch on and reduce their offending.” (Howard Zehr, 2002)

Restorative Justice Philosophy

3 stakeholders:

- ◆ Offenders
- ◆ Victims
- ◆ Community

3 goals:

- ◆ Accountability
- ◆ Public safety
- ◆ Increase offender competencies



Benefits of RJ

Studies have shown RJ programs have:

- ◆ Lower recidivism rates
- ◆ More likely to adhere to restitution agreements
- ◆ 93% of victims satisfied
- ◆ Victims prefer RJ to court appearance

Collaboration

Youth courts can involve the following:

- ◆ Youth
- ◆ Parents
- ◆ Criminal justice system- judges, probation, police, attorneys
- ◆ Community members and groups
- ◆ Social service agencies
- ◆ Schools
- ◆ Business owners

Benefits of Youth Court

Low Recidivism Rates

- ◆ Vermillion County, recidivism rates a low 10% after 1 year; 26% after 4 years (Rasmussen, 2002).
- ◆ Acts more quickly than traditional juvenile court

Cost-Effective

- ◆ Youth Courts use volunteers, so they handle a high number of offenders at relatively little cost to community. (Butts & Buck, 2000)
- ◆ “...among the least expensive crime prevention programs to operate.” (Nessel, 2000)

Benefits Cont.

Benefits to Offenders

- ◆ Satisfaction with Youth Court experience
- ◆ Enhanced perceptions of justice
- ◆ Improved attitudes toward authority
- ◆ Greater knowledge of legal system
- ◆ Increased capacity for making thoughtful decisions
- ◆ Improved grades (Butts & Buck, 2000)

Benefits Cont.

Benefits to the Community and Victims

- ◆ Victim and community involvement
- ◆ Increased satisfaction with the justice system
- ◆ Service completed back to the community (Vermillion County, in 8 years, 4 years worth of community service completed-would cost \$53,000!)

Benefits Cont.

Benefits to Youth Volunteers

- Empowers youth
- Engages them in local issues
- Critical thinking
- Careers in criminal justice
- College applications



Benefits Cont.

To Juvenile Justice System

- ◆ Does not further “clog” the system
- ◆ Youth are held accountable at first offense
- ◆ Saves the system money
- ◆ Low recidivism and high completion rates-
less likely to deal with them again

Support

Supported Nationally and Locally

- ◆ U.S. Department of Justice, OJJDP (National Youth Court Center)
- ◆ American Bar Association
- ◆ Office of the Attorney General Lisa Madigan
- ◆ CJ System- Police, Prosecutors, Judges, Probation
- ◆ Legislation- 25 states with authorizing legislation, including Illinois
- ◆ And many more!!!

Growth of Youth Courts

U.S.

- ◆ Youth Courts are the fastest growing crime intervention program in the nation (American Youth Policy Forum, 2001)
- ◆ Growth rate 1000 % in 10 years
- ◆ 48 states with about 1000 programs

Illinois

- ◆ Growth rate of 28% from 2002-03
- ◆ About 100 programs in state

For More Information

- ◆ Attorney General Lisa Madigan's Illinois Youth Court Association

Web site

<http://www.illinoisattorneygeneral.gov>

(Click on "Keeping Communities Safe")

- ◆ The National Youth Court Center Web site
<http://www.youthcourt.net>